

2005 Oprah Winfrey Soul Series XM Radio Early interview with Eckhart Tolle , Author of Power of Now, A New Earth, Stillness Speaks

[Speaker 7] (0:04 - 0:05)

Welcome to soul series.

[Speaker 2] (0:07 - 4:02)

Welcome back to my soul series, our weekly half hour to be able to delve into, you know, all things really spiritual to challenge the status quo. That's what this show is all about to connect to higher ground and thereby elevate the value of our experience here. And now, uh, the here and now, you know, that's an expression that's achieved in almost, um, you know, cult-like status in our lexicon, but as in any case, when phrases are used and over used in a culture, sometimes they tend to lose their influence and their impact.

And people just sort of toss about the here and the now as a reference in time without actually considering, I think the magnitude of what those words really represent. Today, right now, I want to share with you somebody who has helped me along with millions of other people to really understand just why that phrase, the here and particularly the now is not only vital, but is really all that there is. My guest today should be called, I guess, the father of the now because Eckhart Tolle is, um, widely recognized as one of the most original and inspiring spiritual teachers of our time.

I personally think that, uh, you are a prophet, Mr. Tolle. And I was, uh, first introduced to your teachings back in the year 2000 when, uh, actress Meg Ryan was on my show and she told me about this book. We're in a commercial break.

I don't even know how the subject came up, but she mentioned the power of now and how it was really, uh, having a big impact on her life. And so I went right out and I got the book right away and, uh, I put it in my magazine as one of on the old list. And I, I think I even listed as a favorite thing for Christmas for all of our viewers, the power of now a guide to spiritual enlightenment would have to be one of the most transformative books in my life.

It's always by my bedside, no matter where I am, I carry it with me. I was just saying before I was introducing you at cart that I wished I had my original, original, original copy, because I bought so many copies since the first copy, but my original, original copy, I had so many, um, uh, yellow markings in it for highlighting every sentence. I just thought, well, why don't I just finish reading the book instead of highlighting everything?

Welcome to, to our soul series. Thank you so much for joining us. Well, uh, there's so much I want to talk to you about.

Uh, I know we're not going to get to all of it. So I just want to tell all of our listeners now, those of you who are, um, big supporters, uh, seekers and, and fans of his book, the power of now that this conversation will be continued, uh, next week. Uh, so today's discussion is really, I'm going to try to focus it on the now and the book, the power of now I was so moved in the book when you said you very, in the very beginning of the book, you said 29 years old, having pondered suicide, you were thinking this quote, I cannot live with myself any longer.

This was the thought that kept repeating itself in my mind. And then suddenly I became aware of what a peculiar thought that was. Am I one or two?

If I cannot live with myself, there must be two of me, the I and the self that I cannot live with. Maybe I thought only one of them is real. I love this because it's really one of the first times I thought, yeah, that's right.

When you say I'm going to tell myself something, who is the I and who is the self? That's the fundamental question. Is it not?

[Speaker 1] (4:03 - 7:17)

Yes, that's right. The, um, most people are not aware that they have a, a little man or woman in their head that keeps talking and talking. So there's a voice in the head.

That's the internal dialogue that most people are completely identified with. And in my case, and in many people's case, the voice in the head is a predominantly unhappy one. So there's an enormous amount of unhappiness that is continuously generated by this unconscious internal dialogue.

And in that moment, that night, a separation occurred inside me between the voice, which is the incessant stream of thinking and the sense of self that had become identified with that voice in the head, and a deeper sense of self that I later recognized as essentially consciousness itself. Rather than something that consciousness had become through thinking. So that night, the separation occurred.

And when I woke up the next morning, I was completely at peace for the first time since my childhood, without understanding why. The understanding came much later. So the important point here is that it's essential for people to become aware that their thought processes and the sense of self that is derived from their thinking, which includes, of course, all one's memories, all one's conditioning.

One's sense of self is a conceptual one that is derived from the past. So all the stream of thinking really is a form of conditioning of the past. It's essential for people to recognize that this voice is going on inside them incessantly.

And it's always a breakthrough when people for the first time realize, here's my thinking,

here are all the habitual thoughts that I've been having, repetitive thoughts, very often recurring negative thoughts. And they suddenly realize, and here I am, knowing that these thoughts are going through my head. So the identification is suddenly broken.

And that is, for many people, the first real spiritual breakthrough. Spiritual, as I see it, is not believing in this or that, but it's stepping out of identification with a stream of thinking. So you suddenly find there's another dimension deeper than thinking inside you.

I sometimes call that stillness. It's an aware presence, just that. It's nothing to do with past or future.

And that we could call also, it's like waking up. That's why traditionally in many spiritual traditions, they use the term awakening. So many people would tell you, well, what do you mean awakening?

I'm awake already. But what is meant by awakening is that you wake up out of the stream of thinking. And when you wake up, you become present, a completely different dimension of consciousness is suddenly there.

[Speaker 2] (7:17 - 7:44)

Well, I recall in Stillness Speaks, you talk about the awareness. Stillness Speaks, the book Stillness Speaks, is all about that awareness. And I love the line where you say, once you recognize, I'm paraphrasing, of course, that voice and that you are the observer of that voice, that that very awareness is you.

[Speaker 1] (7:44 - 8:16)

That's right. And not the voice. So you recognize as essentially there's something inside you that has its place.

It's the stream of thinking. It's connected with the past. It contains all your memories.

It contains all reactive patterns. It contains old emotions and so on. They're all part of that.

But essentially, it is not essentially who you are. And that's an amazing realization. Now, the mind, of course, may then ask, well, then tell me who I am.

[Speaker 2] (8:16 - 8:23)

That's the big question. I'm talking to Eckhart Tolle, author of Power of Now. So what is the answer to that question?

[Speaker 1] (8:23 - 9:32)

Well, the answer to that question is who you are cannot be defined through thinking or through mental labels or mental definitions, because it is beyond that. It is the very sense of beingness or presence that is there when you become conscious of the present moment. It's intrinsically one with what we call the present moment.

You, I sometimes say, for example, you might find this a little strange, but in essence, you and what we call the present moment at the deepest level are one. Because you are the consciousness out of which everything comes. Every thought comes out of that consciousness that you are.

Every thought disappears back into that space of consciousness that you are. So essentially, you are a conscious, aware space. And all your sense perceptions, all your thinking, all your emotions happen.

They come and go in that aware space.

[Speaker 2] (9:32 - 9:48)

Yes. Well, did it feel like, Eckhart, when this happened to you, that moment of realization, where you realized the voice was separate from the awareness, that moment that you speak about in the beginning of the book? Did it literally blow your mind?

[Speaker 1] (9:49 - 10:44)

Yes, it did. But I didn't understand it. I just realized suddenly the next day I was at peace, and I remained at peace.

There was a deep sense of inner peace, although externally nothing had changed. So I knew something very drastic had happened, but it took me some years to actually understand what had happened. Some years after, three years after this transformation, I was talking to a Zen monk, and he was telling me, he said, well, Zen basically is very simple.

It's, you don't rely on thinking anymore. It means to go beyond thinking. And I suddenly realized, oh, this is what has happened to me.

That state that I felt was a state of inner peace was also a state of far less thinking than I had been doing before. All that unhappy thinking, all that repetitive thinking wasn't happening to me anymore.

[Speaker 2] (10:45 - 11:02)

And so you have often said in all your books, you characterize thinking as a terrible affliction, even a disease, and that it's the greatest barrier to the power of now. But isn't to think to be human? I thought that's how we are different from other animals.

[Speaker 1] (11:02 - 12:39)

That's right. Thinking can also be a powerful and wonderful tool. It only becomes an affliction if we are totally identified with thinking, and we derive our sense of who we are from the stream of thinking.

In that case, you're telling yourself continuously what I call sometimes the story of me. And in many people's case, it's an unhappy story. So they are continuously dwelling on the past, and there's nothing wrong with the past, but if there's complete self-identification with memory, then all your sense of who you are, your sense of identity, is then derived from the stream of thinking.

And that's a dysfunctional and unhappy state. So when you step out of identification with that, and you realize for the first time, I'm actually the presence behind thinking, then you are able to use thinking when it's helpful and needed, and it can be a wonderful thing. But you're no longer, I'll put it in extreme terms, but it's true, you're no longer then possessed by the thinking mind.

The thinking mind is then a servant or a helpful tool which you can use. It's useful for many situations in this world, but you can't find yourself in there. And also, if you can never be on the thinking mind, it interferes with relationships.

It creates continuous conflict in relationships if there is no sense of space in the relationship.

[Speaker 2] (12:40 - 12:43)

Say that again. If there's no sense of space.

[Speaker 1] (12:43 - 13:51)

No sense of space. That spacious, aware presence that you can bring to the relationship. For example, when you listen to someone.

You listen to your partner, or you listen to a friend, or just an acquaintance. Can you be there as the aware space that is listening? Or are you, while the other person is speaking, continuously thinking, preparing the next thing you're going to say?

Are you judging and evaluating what you're hearing? Are you just interested in your own aims and purposes? Or can you be there as the space for the other person?

And I would say that's the greatest gift you can give a person. It is especially important to parents and children, but also very important in intimate relationships. Can you be there as the space, the aware, conscious space for the other person?

For example, while you listen to the other person, can you listen in that simple state of

alertness in which you're not judging what you're listening to? You're then there as a presence, rather than as a person.

[Speaker 2] (13:52 - 13:52)

Right.

[Speaker 1] (13:52 - 13:57)

So there's a deeper level of awareness is there, and that's what I call the space.

[Speaker 2] (13:57 - 14:06)

I was going to say, you offer them that space in which you allow yourself to be connected to whatever it is they are offering.

[Speaker 1] (14:06 - 14:32)

That's right. There's no judgment in that space. That's right.

You're not defining the other person, and that's an enormous gift that you can give to another person. You're not imposing mental labels, judgments, definitions on the other person. The funny thing, as you know, so many people love their pets, and there's for many millions of people.

[Speaker 2] (14:32 - 14:34)

So many people, I would be one of those people.

[Speaker 1] (14:34 - 14:35)

Yes, me too.

[Speaker 2] (14:35 - 14:35)

Okay.

[Speaker 1] (14:35 - 14:58)

Now, for many people, that's the only area where they realize they can communicate and relate to another being, and that being is not judging them, because the dog accepts you unconditionally as you are. I don't know if you've heard the saying, please God, make me into the person my dog thinks I am.

[Speaker 8] (14:58 - 14:58)

Mm-hmm.

[Speaker 1] (15:00 - 15:32)

So, people feel that sense of freedom when they relate to their pets, because they are not being judged. Now, the animal, of course, is at a state prior to thinking, so that's why the animal can be there as the simple natural presence. But when a human being is there, the human being has moved beyond thinking, and that's the state of awareness.

Well, but both these states are free of definitions and judgments. Jesus, of course, also talked a lot about the importance of not judging another person.

[Speaker 2] (15:32 - 15:52)

Well, you know, since the power of now, so many people have been introduced to this very idea that you presented to us in this book, and, you know, are stimulated by the idea, and even I have had glimpses of that space.

[Speaker 1] (15:53 - 15:54)

Oh, I'm sure you have.

[Speaker 2] (15:54 - 16:01)

Yeah, glimpses of that space, but how can you live in that space? You seem to live in that space.

[Speaker 1] (16:02 - 16:56)

Yes, well, first of all, it's important to acknowledge and to be grateful for the glimpses of it when they happen, and then you can actually not just wait for the space to happen almost as a kind of grace that comes into your life, which sometimes does happen, but you can also invite that space simply by bringing more presence into your life, which means more present moment awareness. For example, I recommend that people use little everyday activities that they do every day unconsciously and bring a conscious presence. When you wash your hands, when you make a cup of coffee, when you walk across a room, down the stairs, you're in the elevator, waiting for the elevator, these are all opportunities for, instead of indulging in thinking, being there as an still alert presence.

[Speaker 2] (16:56 - 17:16)

Yes, like a lot of people, you know, take showers in the morning, they're taking the shower, but they might as well already be in the office because they're thinking about, you know, getting in their car, and what am I going to do today, and what, you know, what is my to-do list, instead of being present in the shower, feeling the water, the essence of the water, the moment, whatever.

[Speaker 1] (17:16 - 17:52)

That's right, so it's bringing little spaces into your everyday life, as many spaces as possible. I say, for example, when you get into your car, shut the door and be there for just half a minute, feel your breathing, perhaps feel the energy inside your body, look around, the sky, the trees, it all it takes is half a minute, and the mind might tell you, I don't have time, that's the mind talking to you, but I would suggest that even the busiest person has time for 30 seconds of space, when they sit in their car, for example, or many other occasions.

[Speaker 2] (17:52 - 18:23)

Well, I will have to tell you that, I think, yes, it was the year 2000 I first read this book, and many, many, many times this book has saved me. I mean, the theories in The Power of Now have saved me, and today, as a matter of fact, I had, you know, one of the most hectic days, but I remember waking up this morning thinking, oh my God, I'm going to be so stressed, I'm going to be so stressed. I let that go, I let those thoughts go, and just thought, I will just, for every moment of the day, be present now.

[Speaker 1] (18:24 - 18:44)

Yes, it's a continuous refocusing on real, what really matters, what matters most in anybody's life, which is always now, the present moment. People don't realize it, that that's really, that's all there ever is. There is no past or future except as memory or anticipation in your mind.

[Speaker 2] (18:44 - 18:55)

But that's what throws me, though, in the book, when you say there's no past. Of course, there has to be a past, because there are all of our memories, there are all these ways we defined ourselves, that's our past.

[Speaker 1] (18:55 - 19:14)

Yes, on one level, you could say, nobody can argue with the fact that there is such a thing as time, there is such a thing as future. Of course, we use time to meet here. We agreed on this particular time.

We said we are going to meet on this day, at that time. Otherwise, it would have been difficult. We might never have met accidentally.

[Speaker 2] (19:15 - 19:25)

And you are hard to find in all the different countries. I'm talking to Eckhart Tolle, the author of Power of Now. But we agreed on this time, and we are here, because this is now.

[Speaker 1] (19:25 - 19:39)

That's right. So, time, then, is something that we cannot do without. We could even say, time is what dominates this entire life that we experience here.

[Speaker 2] (19:39 - 19:41)

This illusionary plane that we're on.

[Speaker 1] (19:41 - 20:28)

That's right. I call it the surface level of reality. Got it.

It's completely dominated by time, which is the past and future in the continuous stream. And people look to time very often for expecting that time will eventually fulfill them, time will eventually give them what they need, time will eventually give them happiness. And sometimes, of course, it does for a while.

But essentially, the true happiness you cannot find by looking into the future, because it is intrinsically one with living deeply in the present moment. So, it has been said that two ways of being unhappy, one is not getting what you want, and the other is getting what you want.

[Speaker 8] (20:29 - 20:29)

Right.

[Speaker 1] (20:29 - 20:55)

Because if you think, this, that, or the other is going to make me happy, even when you get it, and you haven't realized that the present moment is all you ever have, you will again be focusing on the next moment. And always expecting, because it's a mental pattern that is very deep-seated, always focusing, always expecting something in the next moment, never being fully in this moment.

[Speaker 2] (20:55 - 21:26)

Well, another thing that changed me when I read *The Power of Now* over seven years ago was your comments about the fact that all of our stresses, every stress that you have is based upon, for the most part, thinking about what happened in the past or what should be happening in the future. That if you're able to take a deep breath, no matter what crisis is going on in your life, and look at what is happening now, in this moment, right now, I'm okay.

[Speaker 1] (21:26 - 23:25)

That's right. Another way of putting it would be to say, when many people identify their

whole sense of self with problems, problems, they're continuously involved in problems, and so for many people, their whole sense of identity is intimately bound up with the problems they have, or think they have. And often, just as a reality test, I tell people, just a moment, I say, just say, what problem do you actually have at this moment?

Just focus, see what problem you have at this, not in an hour's time or tomorrow morning, but what problem do you have now? And sometimes, people would suddenly wake up when they hear that question, because they have to realize, at this moment, I don't actually have a problem. What you might have is a challenge.

If something, a danger arises, a wild animal jumps into this room, that's a challenge. And then, of course, it's not a problem, because there's no time to make it into a problem. So, for a problem to exist, you need time, and you need mind activity, repetitive mind activity.

In the present moment, there may be a challenge, that is true, there may even be pain, there may be an emotion, but not what we call problem. So, when people think, how do I get out of my problems? I suggest, go into the present moment and see, what is the problem now?

And then, you will always have to admit, well, right now, I don't actually have a problem. And people got that, even people who are in prison. I've had letters from people in prison, some are in for life, they've written to me and said, I understood your message, and I have become free.

And they meant free inside. Free of problem making.

[Speaker 2] (23:25 - 23:31)

Wow. Yes. Yes, similar to Viktor Frankl and Man's Search for Meaning.

[Speaker 1] (23:31 - 23:31)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (23:31 - 23:48)

Yes. Free of problem making. I want to ask you, you know, as I completed the book and have read and re-read it many times over the years, portions of it, all of it, listened to the tapes, I often wonder, do you live like this all the time?

Are you always in the now?

[Speaker 1] (23:48 - 24:31)

Yes, I'm basically in the now, surrendered to what happens. Occasionally, if I see, for

example, somebody inflicting pain on somebody else or something, an emotion may come, anger may arise very briefly and then pass through. It doesn't blink into the brain and creates an enormous amount of useless thinking.

So emotions can come and go, but I'm basically in that state of surrender to what is. Because what is, is always already the case. So you can't really argue internally with what is, because if you do, you suffer.

[Speaker 2] (24:32 - 24:41)

Well, what about having, does it leave you passionless for life though? Because whatever is, is just going to be.

[Speaker 1] (24:41 - 25:15)

No, no. In fact, you're more passionately alive when you are internally aligned with the present moment, which means you let go of this inner resistance, which on a mental level is judgment and complaining, and on an emotional level is some kind of negativity. So these two go together.

Many people have an enormous amount of complaining going on continuously in their mind. Some people do it out aloud all the time.

[Speaker 2] (25:15 - 25:20)

And usually the complaining is about what was or what they wish was.

[Speaker 1] (25:20 - 25:43)

Or what should be, but isn't happening, and this shouldn't be happening, and you shouldn't do this, and I don't want to be here. And so they always find something to complain about. And so these are ways of denying the present moment, and that's a very dysfunctional state, because you're basically denying life itself, because outside of now there is no life.

[Speaker 2] (25:43 - 25:52)

All right, then how do we plan for the future? We're all told that we should plan for the future. We shouldn't just be passive about the future.

[Speaker 1] (25:52 - 27:10)

No, you should plan for the future, and you don't need to lose yourself in the future. If you plan for the future, you can actually enjoy saying, okay, let's say I'm planning a trip, or I'm planning a course of study, and you write down what you have to do, the various steps, and you enjoy that. The question is, are you losing yourself in the future, or are

you simply using time and future on a practical level, where it's fine, it has its place on the practical level?

But if you think that some point that I'm going to reach in the future, now it might be the next vacation, or it might be when I find the ideal partner, or it might be when I get a better job, or better place to live, or live in a more pleasant city, or whatever it is, then I will finally be happy. And so, yes, a continuous projection mentally away from the now, that's where you lose yourself in the future, and that's the dysfunction. Using planning is actually fine.

There's nothing dysfunctional about that. And that's the difference, you can say, between, as I call it, clock time, which has its place in this world, and psychological time, which is the obsession, continuous obsession with past and future.

[Speaker 2] (27:10 - 27:26)

When you say have its place in this world, do you feel that, you know, even now in the human body, which is often, for a lot of people, the pain body that you call it, do you feel that you're straddling both worlds?

[Speaker 1] (27:28 - 28:07)

Yes, you could say that. There's a, it needs to be a balance between dealing with things in this world, which involves time and thinking, but not being totally trapped on this level of time and thinking. Not being totally trapped in time, and totally trapped in the stream of thinking, so that there is a deeper dimension inside you that is actually outside of that stream of time and thinking.

And that's the inner stillness. That's the inner peace. And that is a deep, vibrant sense of aliveness.

So you're actually very passionate about life in that state. Wow.

[Speaker 2] (28:07 - 28:32)

That's what we're looking for here. I just love talking to you. One of my favorite books all time in the world, *The Power of Now* at Cartola.

Thank you so much for joining us this week. And we'll talk next week about one of my favorite things to discuss, the ego, which you speak so profoundly about in your book, *A New Earth, Awakening to Your Life's Purpose*. We'll join you again next week.

Thank you so much, everybody, for listening.

[Speaker 1] (28:32 - 28:32)

Thank you.

[Speaker 7] (28:40 - 28:41)

Welcome to Soul Series.

[Speaker 2] (28:43 - 30:09)

Hi, welcome back to my Soul Series. So excited again, because I get to talk to Eckhart Tolle. Last week, we spoke of The Power of Now.

He's a preeminent spiritual leader. I think he's a for our time for the 21st century, who believes that we are here to enable the divine purpose of the universe to unfold in us. That's in the beginning of his book, The Power of Now.

And he's the author of that breakout bestseller. If you don't have it, it's one of the books that should be a part of your, you know, personal library forever. I can't even tell you how many copies I've bought for everybody.

And if you were to come to my house right now, and you were going to spend the night in either bedroom at my house, it doesn't matter which bedroom you would go to, you'd find a copy of The Power of Now. Sometimes two or three, because when people leave, they like to take it with them. The Power of Now, A Guide to Spiritual Enlightenment.

And he's back to discuss his latest release, A New Earth, Awakening Your Life's Purpose. The inspiration for that title came from a Bible prophecy in both the Old and New Testament, where it speaks of the collapse of the existing world order and the rising of a new heaven and a new earth. For those of you who are Bible readers, well, The Power of Now is one of the most comprehensive and enlightening books, as you heard me say, Eckhart, I've ever had the privilege to read.

Why did you feel the need to write a follow-up? You really didn't have to write another word after The Power of Now.

[Speaker 1] (30:10 - 31:11)

Well, that's true. The teaching evolved in the years after The Power of Now came out. I would travel around the world giving talks.

And what happened then is this, some new approaches came, new perspectives on the same basic truth. It's not a different truth. It's focusing on the same basic truth, but new perspectives towards it.

And also, I felt there was still something to be said about that which blocks the arising new consciousness in most human beings. So there's quite a bit in the book A New Earth about that in us which tends to block the awakened consciousness, the consciousness

that wants to arise now. And one way of putting what that is, is to describe it as I do in the book, it's the human ego.

[Speaker 2] (31:12 - 31:20)

This is my favorite thing to talk about, the ego. You say the ego is destined to dissolve.

[Speaker 1] (31:20 - 31:29)

How so? Well, first we need to see clearly what the ego is, because sometimes people use that word and they mean different things.

[Speaker 2] (31:29 - 31:31)

Yeah, they mean you're being arrogant.

[Speaker 1] (31:32 - 34:08)

That's right. It's a much wider thing. It's not just being selfish or being arrogant or thinking yourself superior.

That's a small aspect of ego. Ego is basically a self-identification with the stream of thinking. So that collectively, I would say the beginning of ego is actually described at the beginning of the Old Testament, where there is the famous story of the apple, which everybody knows, even non-Bible readers.

So it is said there that they ate of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge and good and evil. And that was when they lost that state that is externalized in the Bible and called paradise. What does that mean?

To me, that means it is the arising of the ability to think and to differentiate between things. This is good. This is bad.

To make statements like that, to make judgments like that, which is to be able to tell good, is basically the ability to think, which is a myth. So this is a mythological description of what happened to humanity. And at first, the ability to think was not entirely bad.

They lost something. They lost a deeper state of connectedness. But I don't think that deeper state of connectedness with being was lost immediately, as it's described in the Bible.

I believe it took a long, long time of increased thinking until people reached a point where they derived their entire sense of who they are from the stream of thinking. So what that looks like in a person's life is there is a almost, one could say, a mind-made entity which is made up entirely of memories and past conditioning and mental

concepts. And this entity, which really is all made up of thinking, people derive their sense of who they are from this mind-made entity.

So it's a mind image of who I am. People have split themselves in two. They think there's me and there's myself.

Me and my story. The ego is the story of me that people identify with.

[Speaker 2] (34:08 - 34:18)

You say in the New Earth, ego is no more than this, identification with form, which primarily means thought forms.

[Speaker 1] (34:18 - 34:21)

Yes, that's right. That's what the ego is.

[Speaker 2] (34:21 - 34:35)

And you say if evil has any reality, and it has a relative, not an absolute reality, this is also its definition of evil, complete identification with form, physical forms, thought forms, emotional forms.

[Speaker 1] (34:35 - 34:36)

That's right.

[Speaker 2] (34:36 - 35:15)

And that this results in a total unawareness of my connectedness with the whole, my intrinsic oneness with every other, as well as with the source. And this forgetfulness is original sin, suffering, or delusion. And when I heard that, I thought, yes, you're right.

For every evil act we've ever heard described, or when we think of people as doing sinful things, it is because of a complete and utter disconnection, a lack of understanding that I am that person that I am attempting to violate. I am that which I am jealous of. I am that.

[Speaker 1] (35:15 - 36:23)

Yes, yes. It means you cannot sense the aliveness anymore that is in the other person. So, you have desensitized yourself to the aliveness.

Now, you can only do that if you've already done this to yourself, because by living through mental definitions of who you are, you desensitize yourself to the deeper aliveness of who you truly are beyond thinking. So, you become, what arises then is a conceptual identity. I'm this, that, or the other.

And then, once you are trapped in your own conceptual identity, which is based on thinking and image-making by the mind, on your past, then you do the same to others. And this is the beginning of that, is always when you pronounce judgments on another person, and then you believe that judgment to be the truth, calling people, attaching labels to people. That's the beginning of desensitizing yourself to who that human being truly is.

[Speaker 2] (36:23 - 36:50)

I'm having a conversation here with Eckhart Tolle, who is author of *The Power of Now*, of course, and *A New Earth, Awakening to Your Life's Purpose*. So, if you are not your story, and most people, I do believe, think that they are. We live in a world where people believe, I am my story.

I was born in this family, and this is where I was raised, and these are the things that happened to me, and this is what I did. If you are not your story, then who are you?

[Speaker 1] (36:50 - 37:04)

That's a very good question, because you cannot deny, of course, that these things exist, your memories of the past, things that you suffered, perhaps even things, suffering that you might have inflicted on others.

[Speaker 2] (37:04 - 37:07)

And even not all suffering, my family connections, the people I love.

[Speaker 1] (37:08 - 38:11)

Yes, you have a so-called past, you have relationships, all that is fine. It is not problematic unless you become totally lost in that dimension alone. So, you have no access to a deeper sense of aliveness or beingness beyond the stream of thinking, because really, all that is based on memory.

All your past, how do you experience your past? You experience your past as memories. And what are memories?

Memories are thoughts in your head. And there's nothing wrong with that. But if you are totally identified with all these thoughts in your head, then you are completely trapped in your past history.

There's no sense of anything beyond that in your life. So, the important thing is, am I more than my personal history?

[Speaker 2] (38:12 - 38:33)

Well, you speak in A New Earth, you speak about how advertisers are counting on us to believe in the labels, and that we identify with, particularly in our society, exclusive labels. And the more exclusive the label, the more we identify with it.

[Speaker 1] (38:33 - 40:56)

Yes, that's right, because the ego wants to be special, one way or another. Every ego wants to be special. And if the ego cannot be special by being superior to others, the ego would also be quite happy with being specially miserable.

So, you may have seen business people who are saying, one person says to the other, I have a headache. The other person says, you have a headache? I've had a headache for weeks.

So, people actually compete who is more miserable, you or me. It's just the ego that does that is just as big as the ego that says, I'm superior to you. Because the ego always wants to be special.

So, if you recognize in yourself that unconscious need to be special, then you already are free. Because when you recognize all the patterns of the ego, and specialness is one pattern of the ego, another pattern of the ego, it wants to be right all the time. Another pattern of the ego is, it actually needs, it loves conflict with others.

And that's an amazing thing. Of course, it's unconscious, because the ego defines itself through a boundary that it draws. This is me, and that is the other.

And that's an important word, because you need, the ego needs to emphasize the otherness of the other person. And that happens on a personal level, when people are suspicious of other people's motives, and so on. And there's a need for enemies, which is deeply built into the ego.

The ego needs enemies, because it defines itself through emphasizing the otherness of others. And nations do it, religions do it. The believer, if you identify with one particular religion, and for many people, religion is only a mind structure, not in its deepest sense.

But for many people, a religion is an ideology that they identify with. And then they need the non-believer, the other, because by having the other, they feel their own sense of identity more strongly.

[Speaker 2] (40:56 - 41:20)

Right. And they need the other in order to feel their own sense of identity. Yes.

More strongly. Yes. They need enemies.

I thought you did such a great job of explaining this, because you say, it first starts with

a baby, when the baby first reaches for the toy, and realizes, and the toy is taken away, or not given to them, and they say, no, that's mine.

[Speaker 1] (41:20 - 41:25)

That's right. That is mine. That's the beginning of identification with things.

[Speaker 2] (41:25 - 41:33)

Identification with things. And that what happens is, is that we all just grow up, and we just get bigger toys, different toys.

[Speaker 1] (41:34 - 42:20)

That's right. Yes. So it's always, ego is always identification with one form or another.

It could be a physical form, as a possession, my house, my car, and so on. So when you, when you're identified, your sense of who you are is in that thing. So, and if that thing then is criticized, for example, by somebody else, you will become, you will become extremely defensive, or aggressive, because you're feeling, your very sense of self is being threatened.

And then there are other forms of identification, for example, my opinions, mind forms. Right. People have very strong identification with their mental positions.

And I am right. I am right. And that implies, of course, that somebody else has to be wrong.

Right. So that I can continue to be right.

[Speaker 2] (42:20 - 42:35)

But tell me this, then, I'm thinking this, that, you know, as long as we are in this dense human form, perhaps we must need the ego. Otherwise, why would we have it? Otherwise, we would have evolved out of it.

[Speaker 1] (42:36 - 43:29)

We are now evolving out of it. The ego has been there for thousands of years. And as you say, the fact that it was there, has been there for thousands of years, means it has its place in the evolution of humanity.

So, I'm not saying it should never have happened. The ego had its place. It was the ability to think, develop more and more, so that gradually we became so identified with thinking, that we lost a deeper connectedness with life, which is described as the paradise in the beginning of the Old Testament.

That deeper connectedness with life. We are now, I believe, at an evolutionary transition, where many human beings, far more human beings than ever before, are able to grow out of, go beyond ego into a new state of consciousness.

[Speaker 2] (43:29 - 43:36)

Yes. You say that we face a very stark and daunting choice, and that is to either evolve or die.

[Speaker 1] (43:36 - 44:12)

Yes. This is the point where the evolution of consciousness, the awakening of humanity, is no longer a luxury. Because now, we've reached a point, if we don't grow out of the dysfunction of the ego, because the ego is now being amplified, the effects of this dysfunction are being amplified by technology.

Right. So, what we are doing to ourselves, to our fellow human beings, and to the planet, is becoming more and more destructive and devastating.

[Speaker 2] (44:12 - 44:24)

Yes. I had a conversation with Elie Wiesel yesterday. He was saying that this will be known as the 6th century.

Sick century.

[Speaker 1] (44:24 - 44:24)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (44:24 - 44:31)

Yes. In our ability just to do the most evil and sickest of things to one another.

[Speaker 1] (44:31 - 44:41)

Yes. I mean, look at the 20th century. It was dreadful.

The worst ever in terms of human suffering inflicted on humans, by humans, on other humans.

[Speaker 2] (44:41 - 44:58)

Yes, but we were saying that it doesn't seem that we learned. We didn't learn. We didn't learn.

It seems to have gotten even worse, and you were right, because of technology, because there are even greater bombs, guns, and ammunition that can kill from further

distances.

[Speaker 1] (44:58 - 45:28)

Yes. Now, the question is, sometimes people ask me, are things actually getting better or worse? And my answer is, at the moment, things are both getting better and worse, which means there are two streams in existence now.

One is the old stream, the old consciousness, the unenlightened, the unawakened egoic consciousness, which is actually still continuing. You can see it a lot of the time when you watch the news in the evening.

[Speaker 2] (45:29 - 45:31)

That is the consciousness.

[Speaker 1] (45:31 - 45:36)

That's the old consciousness, which is still just as mad as before, if not more mad.

[Speaker 2] (45:36 - 45:41)

Well, the fact that we just repeat all the bad things that are happening in the world.

[Speaker 1] (45:41 - 46:10)

That's right. That's one stream. The other stream is us sitting here now and talking, because that represents we are part of, I'm not saying we are special, but the fact that we are addressing this, and the fact that many, many people are listening to this, and it is meaningful to them, means that there is another stream here, which is the stream of humanity awakening.

And both are present at this time on the planet.

[Speaker 2] (46:10 - 46:34)

And as we choose to evolve, you and I sitting here, and everyone else who's listening to us, and this conversation hits a nerve, or has a moment, and I call them aha moments, or they just find the conversation interesting, and will cause them to look at life differently today. As we do that, are we actually creating a new earth?

[Speaker 1] (46:34 - 48:16)

First of all, what happens is a new state of consciousness arises. It's not so much that we now need to get busy and create a new earth, because that would be premature. Many times, humans have tried to create a new society, or a utopia, and they all failed miserably.

So, look at communism. It started with a good idea, everybody is equal, and see what it did. Millions of people were killed in the name of communism.

So, first of all, the important thing is that we are open to the transformation of consciousness that is happening now. Out of that transformed consciousness, which in essence simply means we are no longer completely identified with thinking. We realize that inside ourselves, there is a dimension in which I am conscious, I am present, I'm awake, I'm alert, but I'm simply an aware space.

That's presence, I call it presence. You can have other words for it, awareness, unconditioned consciousness. Stillness.

Stillness. That arises now in many human beings. And so, as that arises and gradually replaces identification with thinking, and replaces relying on thinking exclusively to run your life, there's actually, in that stillness, in that awareness, there is a higher, far greater intelligence at work.

[Speaker 2] (48:16 - 48:26)

I know you say, I love how you say, let us allow nature to teach us stillness. If you want to understand stillness, you know, stand beside a tree or watch a tree.

[Speaker 1] (48:26 - 49:39)

Yes, that's a great help, just watching a tree, a plant, and be there, just watch it, be there as the aware presence that perceives the flower, the tree, the plant, the animal. Nature is always very helpful for people who want to connect with the stillness. Man-made things very often generate more thinking, because they are made through thinking.

So, go to nature, and then eventually, it's important, of course, that you also are able to sustain the state of stillness, even in the midst of a city. I actually enjoy, I'm in New York at the moment, I enjoy walking along the busy, busy streets with infernal noise and people rushing about, and feeling actually in the background, a deep sense of stillness. And actually, I can even enjoy all that movement.

And it's wonderful to be able to be there as the stillness, and not completely get drawn into some reaction. It's like being in the world, but not of it. That's exactly what it is.

[Speaker 2] (49:39 - 50:10)

Being in the world, but not of it. Yes. So, tell us how we can get to be more like you.

How can we not allow ourselves to be dominated by the ego? I know it's a lifelong process, but just for those who are listening now, who are going to read A New Earth, and read The Power of Now, and come away thinking, okay, I'm inspired by that,

stimulated by, what can I begin to do today to not to have myself dominated by my ego?
Yes.

[Speaker 1] (50:10 - 50:37)

Now, the ego cannot survive in the stillness. That's important to realize. So, that means, invite stillness into your life.

Now, that does not mean that stillness is something that you need to get from the outside, or somehow create for yourself. It's realizing that everybody underneath the stream of thinking already has the stillness.

[Speaker 2] (50:37 - 50:40)

Right. So, you don't have to go to Hawaii and sit on a mountaintop.

[Speaker 1] (50:40 - 53:01)

No. And you don't have to do anything to create it, because essentially it's already there. And if you look very deeply into yourself and see, where does my sense of I-ness, when people say I, they have this sense of I am essentially the deeper I, where does that sense of I-ness come from?

And then, if you look very closely, you'll find, it's actually intrinsically bound up with this, the dimension of stillness. So, that's why I say in my book, *Stillness Speaks*, you are never more essentially yourself than when you are still. So, you invite stillness into your life.

You can do it by taking a few conscious breaths many times during the day. Just observe your breath flowing in and out. Another way of bringing stillness, or finding the stillness that's already there, is feeling the aliveness of your body from within.

I call that the inner body. And that immediately takes your attention away from the stream of thinking, a lot of which is repetitive and useless, and bring it into the body and feel, is there life in my hands? And then you feel it.

Oh, yes, very subtle, but it's there. Is there life in my feet, my legs, my arms? And then you feel that your entire inner body is pervaded by a sense of aliveness.

And then that can serve as an anchor for remaining present, when your attention, or part of your attention, remains in the inner body. Even at this very moment, for people who are listening to us, they can practice it, and they can see that even while they are conscious of the words that they hear, they're completely following what we are saying, but it does not need to take up a hundred percent of their attention. They can have some of their attention, even as they sit there or stand there and listen, in the inner energy field of the body, and feel there is an aliveness in every cell of the body.

And that's a wonderful anchor for stillness and for presence. It doesn't mean you turn completely away from the external world. It actually brings balance into your life between being still and still being able to deal with things out here.

[Speaker 2] (53:02 - 53:04)

It's finding the space in between.

[Speaker 1] (53:04 - 53:04)

That's right.

[Speaker 2] (53:05 - 53:17)

It's finding the space. It's like when you're reading the book, I remember reading the book Power of Now for the first time, and you were saying it is the space in between, it's the awareness of what's on the page, and the space in between that awareness.

[Speaker 1] (53:17 - 53:45)

Yes. And you may also find, talking about the space in between, that you may sometimes become aware, when a thought has come to an end in your head, that between two thoughts there is a short silent space. And when you acknowledge that, which means you suddenly become conscious that for a moment there's no thinking, then it becomes a little longer.

And so you have a longer gap of stillness.

[Speaker 2] (53:46 - 53:51)

And then... But if you become aware for so long, you start thinking about it and then you lose it.

[Speaker 1] (53:51 - 53:57)

Then you lose it. The moment you say, oh look, I'm not thinking, then you're thinking again, of course. Right, right.

[Speaker 2] (53:58 - 54:05)

Is there anyone on earth at this time who you think is free of the domination of the ego? First of all, are you free of the domination of the ego?

[Speaker 1] (54:05 - 55:19)

I'm not identified with my thinking, which means I'm free of domination of the ego. And there are many, many people right now who are going through this process. They may

not yet be 100% free, but they are going through the process in which they become gradually disidentified from the stream of compulsive thinking.

I'm getting letters, emails every day from all over the world of people who are telling me how their lives have changed, sometimes just by reading the book, and how they become free of identification with their mind. They are not yet totally free, which means sometimes they fall back into ego. Sometimes they fall back into obsessive thinking, compulsive thinking, addictive thinking, because for many people thinking is basically an addiction.

And then suddenly they wake up again. So it's a process that many, many people are now undergoing. I cannot tell you exactly how many, but my intuition is that in the Western world, about 10% of the adult population are at the beginning stages or a bit further, some further advanced of this process.

[Speaker 2] (55:19 - 55:41)

Well, I love also how you say in the book, we're talking about, you know, the whole tone of the book is about awakening your life's purpose. A New Earth is awakening your life's purpose. And you say that there are a lot of people who realize that how spiritual you are has nothing to do with what you believe, but everything to do with your state of consciousness.

[Speaker 1] (55:41 - 55:55)

Yes, and that's, again, it's the stillness that's the spiritual dimension. It's not any thought. Thought in itself is not spiritual.

Thought can be sometimes helpful because it can be a pointer. For example, when we say...

[Speaker 2] (55:55 - 55:56)

And beliefs are not spiritual. That's what I learned from you.

[Speaker 1] (55:56 - 56:10)

No, because beliefs are thoughts. No, some beliefs can be helpful, but only as pointers. I mean, even if we say, find the stillness that's already inside you, that's still a thought, but the thought is pointing beyond itself.

[Speaker 2] (56:11 - 56:22)

I love what you say at the end of the book, that the foundation for a new earth is a new heaven, the awakened consciousness, because what did Jesus tell his disciples? That heaven is right here in the midst of you.

[Speaker 1] (56:22 - 56:38)

Yes, that's a wonderful thing Jesus said. Heaven does not come with signs to be observed. You can't say, ah, there it is, or look, here it is, because it is essentially already within you, in the midst of you.

The stillness. The stillness.

[Speaker 2] (56:39 - 57:04)

All right. Can you believe another... We're out of time again.

Next, those of you who've been so intrigued, so empowered by words that you've heard and read over the years, and not just from listening to us, will have an opportunity to ask questions of Eckhart Tolle here on our Soul Series. Thank you again. Our listeners get to talk to you.

That's gonna be great.

[Speaker 1] (57:04 - 57:05)

Thank you.

[Speaker 2] (57:05 - 58:10)

Thank you. Welcome to Soul Series. Glad you can join me again on my Soul Series.

This week, I've been hogging Eckhart Tolle, author of *The Power of Now*, to myself, and he's kindly been indulging my many questions. I could really spend a day and a night and a weekend. Boy, would you be great for a slumber party.

But since this is talk radio and you're listening to me on Oprah and Friends XM 156, I thought it would be really great to open up the lines and have him share his wisdom and indulge in your questions. I placed a brief paragraph on my website, oprah.com, soliciting people who'd read *The Power of Now* and who had questions of their own for Eckhart, and I knew we'd get a great response, but I was blown away by the volume and the intensity of those responses that so many of you sent in. You know, Eckhart, well, you do know this, that you've literally transformed the lives of so many people.

What does that feel like to you?

[Speaker 1] (58:11 - 58:51)

Well, I don't feel that I did it. Something happened through me and that's how the book got written, and that's when I give talks or answer questions. I also feel not so much that I am doing it, but it's a process that happens when you become still.

I always begin the answer to every question or the beginning of every talk I give is entering the stillness and becoming comfortable with not knowing. And out of that being comfortable with not knowing comes the knowing. And I don't feel I don't identify with that which comes.

I just allow that to come.

[Speaker 2] (58:53 - 59:06)

Wow. Well, that's called, well, yep, you said to us last week you weren't dominated by the ego, so you don't feel either it's great or not great or isn't this a great thing and isn't this wonderful? So many people are reading my book.

You don't.

[Speaker 1] (59:07 - 59:27)

No, I remember my old ego, of course, would have loved it. But it really doesn't, I don't have that sense now of even having achieved anything as such. It's just being open for it to happen, being an open channel for the consciousness to evolve.

Gee, I love that.

[Speaker 2] (59:27 - 59:48)

You know, I can't say that I am not dominated by my ego, but I do feel that sometimes when people will say to me, I've watched your show, your show, I just was coming across the street here to radio and there were three women standing on the corner and said, your show changed my life. And, you know, I was wanting to feel something about it, but I just sort of thought, well, okay.

[Speaker 1] (59:48 - 59:58)

Yes, because I have a feeling with you also that is happening, that many things that you do and say are actually come from a deeper place than the ego.

[Speaker 2] (59:58 - 1:00:01)

That's right. I'm just, that's what I'm supposed to do.

[Speaker 1] (1:00:01 - 1:00:01)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (1:00:01 - 1:00:09)

That's how I feel about it. Well, this is exciting. Wendy Graham is on the phone.

Hello. Hello. How are you, Oprah?

Hi, Wendy.

[Speaker 6] (1:00:10 - 1:00:11)

Hi, Eckhart. How are you?

[Speaker 1] (1:00:11 - 1:00:13)

Fine. Thank you. Thank you.

[Speaker 6] (1:00:13 - 1:00:32)

Thank you so much for your work and sharing your life with the world. I am so grateful. And the question I have for you this evening is, how do you embody what you talk about?

You being free of the domination of ego. Can you please share your experience of living in the here and now?

[Speaker 1] (1:00:33 - 1:06:32)

Well, thank you, Wendy. Thank you. The, basically, life becomes very, very simple.

So I don't inhabit a world of problems because my primary interest and the primary focus of my conscious attention is always in the present moment. It doesn't mean that I'm not aware that there is a so-called future. I may be aware I have to go to this or that place.

I have to be there in an hour or two hours or tomorrow I'm going there. On the periphery of consciousness, there's always the knowledge of what needs to be done on that level. But the primary focus is always on the present moment.

And so life becomes basically very simple. And it could also be described as a state of surrender to life, which is always the now. So my relationship with the now is a very friendly one.

And I sometimes actually suggest to people that they can also, if they inhabit a life full of problems, they can actually also change their relationship to the present moment. So that's a very important question to ask yourself at any time. What is my relationship with this moment?

And then you need to be alert and see, am I making this moment into an enemy? Am I treating it as if it were an enemy? Or am I treating this moment as if it were an obstacle that I need to overcome?

For many people, the present moment is always some kind of obstacle because they

think they always need to get to some other moment desperately, but it's always this moment. Or am I reducing this moment to a means to an end, just a stepping stone to get to the next moment? These are all ways of denying the present moment, a means to an end, an obstacle, or even an enemy.

So become aware many times during the day and see, how am I relating to the present moment? When you do that, what you're really asking is, what is my relationship with life? Because the present moment is essentially your life.

It's nowhere else, never, ever. Your life, you can only encounter your life in the present moment, nowhere else. So it's a vital question to ask yourself what your relationship is with life.

Because if your relationship with life is one of hostility, which is when you make the present moment into an obstacle or an enemy, then life always reflects back to you your predominant state of consciousness. So when you are treating the present moment as if it were something undesirable, your life experience will then reflect back to you that state of consciousness, which means you experience life as hostile. One bad thing after another, one problem after another.

But what if you really do have problems? You have to always start, enter the present moment with your attention, so that you find that space of now in which actually problems cannot survive. In the now.

In the now. And out of that, because then that moment you contact a deeper intelligence than the conditioned thinking mind. That is the place out of which intuition comes, out of which creative action comes.

It's the place out of which knowing comes, wisdom comes, right action comes. So you find, first of all, go deeper into now, so that make sure that you are one internally with the present moment, so that you're not in a state of negativity to do with the present moment. Because that is a dysfunctional state.

Now, you could, of course, take action on the basis of negativity. For example, you might feel very unhappy with having little money. And then you become angry even.

And then you work extremely hard. And finally, after five or ten years, you become wealthy. But all that action is contaminated by the negativity if it comes out of anger.

And it will create further suffering for yourself and others. So the important thing is, am I aligned internally with the present moment? No matter what it is, you say, this is what is.

And you open yourself to that. And no matter what the situation is, you can always find something to be grateful for. Because great gratitude is an essential part of being present.

Because when you go deeply into the present, the gratitude arises spontaneously. Even if it's just gratitude for breathing. It's gratitude for drinking a glass of water.

It's gratitude for that tree that you see there. Gratitude for perhaps the aliveness that you feel in your body. Gratitude is there when you acknowledge the aliveness of the present moment.

The power of life wants to come through you, but it can't. Only a little trickle, perhaps, if you're lucky, comes through. So the most vital thing for anybody who wants to even change their lives is, first of all, come to a relationship with the present moment that is one of openness, friendliness, acceptance.

[Speaker 2] (1:06:33 - 1:06:37)

Even if something is going on in that moment that is making you uncomfortable?

[Speaker 1] (1:06:37 - 1:06:43)

Yes, even if it looks externally, the mind would usually judge it as negative.

[Speaker 2] (1:06:43 - 1:06:48)

You are very highly enlightened. Because that's hard to do when you're in the middle of a crisis, I got to tell you.

[Speaker 1] (1:06:48 - 1:06:59)

It's hard to do, but it's something for people to find out whether they can do it. Okay. And sometimes the mind will tell you, oh, there's no point in even trying.

All right.

[Speaker 7] (1:07:09 - 1:07:10)

Welcome to Soul Series.

[Speaker 1] (1:07:12 - 1:07:32)

So, very often the thought that says you can't do it, or the thought that says you can't be present now because you've got too much on your mind, says the mind. So, you don't necessarily have to believe every thought that comes into your head. And you see, oh, there's another thought that says I can't be present.

Yes. And then you're present.

[Speaker 2] (1:07:32 - 1:07:38)

Just keep going back to what we were saying on a previous show. In this moment, right

now, I'm all right.

[Speaker 1] (1:07:38 - 1:08:03)

Yes. So the question was, how do you do it? How do I live?

And that's how I live. But I'm saying the important thing is not so much how I live. The important thing is how you live.

And the essence of this transformation of this way of empowered living is to make the present moment your friend. That's the foundation for all of our empowerment. Okay, Wendy.

[Speaker 2] (1:08:03 - 1:08:04)

Thank you, Wendy.

[Speaker 6] (1:08:04 - 1:08:06)

Thank you, Oprah. Thank you, Eckhart. Thank you so much.

[Speaker 2] (1:08:07 - 1:08:35)

All right. That's Wendy. I know Wendy.

Wendy's my daughter. That's how she got the first phone call. She's my life partner's daughter.

So I've watched her grow up since she was a child. And we talk about these all the time, this subject all the time. And when she heard that you were going to be on, she was like, oh, please.

I called her and I said, I would send the tape. And then I said, you know what? Do you have a question?

And so she's been planning her question probably now for six days. That's great. All right.

Thanks, Wendy. I'm getting on to Anthony. Anthony, hello.

[Speaker 5] (1:08:36 - 1:08:37)

Hi, Oprah.

[Speaker 2] (1:08:37 - 1:08:37)

How are you?

[Speaker 5] (1:08:38 - 1:08:39)

I'm good. Hi, Eckhart.

[Speaker 1] (1:08:39 - 1:08:40)

Hello, Anthony.

[Speaker 5] (1:08:41 - 1:08:45)

My question has to do with human relationships.

[Speaker 1] (1:08:46 - 1:08:46)

Yes.

[Speaker 5] (1:08:46 - 1:08:59)

As evolving spiritual beings, how do we stay in touch and connected with other people, particularly family members and close friends that are highly unconscious?

[Speaker 1] (1:09:00 - 1:09:44)

All right. Yes. Thank you.

Good question. That's many people will be able to relate to that question. When you feel that you are becoming more conscious, you're waking up out of identification with the mind, then in some cases you find family members, close friends, relative, they are still totally immersed in identification with ego and with thinking.

Your primary thing, of course, primary purpose is not to expect others to be conscious. So first of all, you need to drop your expectation that others should be conscious or should behave consciously.

[Speaker 2] (1:09:45 - 1:10:02)

And also there's a little bit of, I remember when I first started many years ago, becoming more aware, there's a little cockiness that comes, which is obviously your ego. I know that now, where you're kind of like, I know this and you don't. So you have to put that in its place also.

[Speaker 1] (1:10:02 - 1:11:37)

That's right. Yes. Because at many stages of one's awakening, the ego can come back in.

Right. And say, and claim some kind of specialness. Yes, because I know and you don't.

Yes. Yes. Because the moment you say, I know, and you don't, that you have identified

yourself with a mental position, which I know, and that's the ego.

Yes. So first of all is you accept other people, you accept where they are at in their evolutionary development. So first comes the acceptance of others.

And then you may find as you continue to practice presence, as you continue to grow in awareness, you may find that certain people around you are also beginning to change. Some will, some won't. If there's the slightest readiness in a person close to you, then something that is happening inside you will transmit itself, so to speak, and also trigger another person's awakening.

If there is an opening in the other person for that. So what people usually find as they awaken spiritually is that some people around them awaken with them, and then you're on that journey together. And they also find that other people, friends, drift out of their lives gradually.

Those who are not ready to awaken.

[Speaker 2] (1:11:37 - 1:11:39)

Because don't you attract like frequency?

[Speaker 1] (1:11:40 - 1:13:01)

That's right. So, and you also, you attract very often, as you say, new people into your life that correspond to this new frequency. That's arising within you.

Now, one other point here is that there may be certain family members, people who will remain in your life. And it's quite possible that they may not awaken. And your spiritual practice is to surrender to the fact that they are who they are at this moment.

Wow. This is not expect them to be different. The moment you drop your expectation of, let's say, your parents, they should be more conscious, or what other kinds of expectations that people have is, my parents should understand me.

But they don't. Why should they? So you drop the should, which is a thought, and you accept your parents the way they are.

And the next time you visit them, maybe your father says the same thing to you. He says, you should have listened to me 20 years ago. You would be better off now, whatever the old story is that you've heard so many times.

And instead of reacting in the same old way, you can simply allow him to say that and just be there as an open presence for what, for those words, for what he's saying.

[Speaker 2] (1:13:01 - 1:13:11)

I got it. I just had an epiphany. You surrender your attachment to.

Your expectation of what any outcome should be. Exactly. Yes.

I got that. Did you get it, Anthony?

[Speaker 5] (1:13:12 - 1:13:14)

I did. I very much did. Thank you.

[Speaker 2] (1:13:14 - 1:13:25)

Wow, that's great. You just, you know, and you've said this, Eckhart, about how you move through life, surrendering to the now. You surrender to what is.

[Speaker 1] (1:13:25 - 1:13:25)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (1:13:25 - 1:13:35)

And then that's what you were trying to explain to him. You do the same thing with all other situations and obstacles with people or whatever your expectation of them should be.

[Speaker 1] (1:13:35 - 1:14:35)

You surrender to that. That's right. So because very often when we talk about surrendering to the now or accepting the now as it is, very often it means a person that is there in front of you in the now.

Right, right. So you accept whatever this person says or does will be a reflection of their evolutionary stage. And you accept it as it is.

The amazing thing is when you completely accept a human being as they are right now, without demanding that they should be different or they should be more conscious, if you completely accept them, very often change happens which otherwise would never have happened. Wow. If you had resisted or if you had demanded or expected this or that.

There's an enormous power behind that acceptance, because the moment you accept another human being completely, a deeper consciousness comes into play, because that's another way of contacting the space or the stillness inside you.

[Speaker 2] (1:14:35 - 1:14:44)

I got it. I had another epiphany because I was just going to say, when you accept them, it

changes the frequency. It changes the energy.

It changes the space.

[Speaker 1] (1:14:44 - 1:14:44)

Exactly.

[Speaker 2] (1:14:45 - 1:14:46)

The whole frequency changes.

[Speaker 3] (1:14:47 - 1:14:47)

That's it.

[Speaker 2] (1:14:47 - 1:14:48)

I got it.

[Speaker 3] (1:14:48 - 1:14:51)

Okay, Lisa, how are you? Hi, I'm good. How are you?

[Speaker 2] (1:14:51 - 1:14:53)

Good. Your question for Eckhart Tolle.

[Speaker 3] (1:14:53 - 1:14:54)

Yes. Hi, Eckhart.

[Speaker 2] (1:14:55 - 1:14:55)

Hello, Lisa.

[Speaker 3] (1:14:56 - 1:16:04)

I seem to be a little bit backwards in terms of really understanding the power of now. I am an artist. I am very familiar with being in the moment, and I feel like I embrace that and live it fully as my calling.

As you two mentioned earlier, I have a sense of being in this world but not of this world, so when I get a compliment on the painting, it doesn't actually feel like I've done the painting. It's a compliment for... Yes.

The big picture, whoever the powers that be. And what I aspire to is having more of that kind of experience in my daily life, in the mundane tasks, which seems to take up a lot of time. Yes.

And so I'm wondering, what does life look like when you're fully engaged and you're cleaning the cat box or you're doing the bills or you're...

[Speaker 1] (1:16:04 - 1:16:04)

Yes.

[Speaker 3] (1:16:05 - 1:16:05)

Grocery shopping.

[Speaker 1] (1:16:06 - 1:16:12)

Okay, yeah. So you are able to be present when you do your artwork.

[Speaker 3] (1:16:13 - 1:16:16)

Yeah, and also when I'm driving, oddly enough.

[Speaker 1] (1:16:16 - 1:16:25)

Yes. And now what happens when you go shopping or do other tasks at home? You lose the presence?

[Speaker 3] (1:16:25 - 1:16:27)

Frustrated and bored.

[Speaker 1] (1:16:27 - 1:16:28)

Ah, yes.

[Speaker 3] (1:16:28 - 1:16:28)

Bored, yeah.

[Speaker 1] (1:16:28 - 1:17:03)

Yes, yes. Okay. Okay.

Good. Let's see. You have to become very alert to look at your inner state at that time.

And when you say, I become frustrated or bored, you have to become alert and see what that actually means, what happens inside you when you become frustrated or bored. And you may find that a whole train of thinking arises that is either negative about what you're doing or about some problem that you may have.

[Speaker 7] (1:17:05 - 1:17:07)

Welcome to Soul Series.

[Speaker 1] (1:17:09 - 1:19:16)

What is boredom? Boredom is the thinking mind is looking for some kind of stimulus and it's not finding enough because the cleaning job, like the cleaning that you're doing is not enough for the thinking mind. So, it gets very bored and restless.

It says, I want something more interesting to feed on. So, basically, it's the mind begins to be active inside you and then the opportunity arises of being the awareness that observes what your mind is doing at this moment. So, your mind is complaining perhaps about what you're doing or doesn't like it and has certain judgments about it.

And then you may also observe the emotions that you have that come with those judgments when the mind says, I don't want to be doing this. I would rather be doing something else. What emotion do you have when the mind says that?

Because to a large extent, the emotions you experience are a reflection of your thought processes. So, you observe the two levels, thinking and the emotions as a reflection of thinking in the body. And then you ask yourself, okay, you become aware of the thoughts and you become aware of the emotions, the restlessness, the anxiety.

And then you ask yourself, who am I at this moment? And you will realize you are not the thinking. You are not the emotions.

You are the awareness behind them from where you can see, observe the thinking and the emotions. And the moment you realize that you are the awareness, you're actually in a different state of consciousness. And you're not bored anymore.

You're not bored. You're totally present again. So, you are present as the witness or the observer of your mind and of your emotions.

So, the important question is, at this moment, who am I? The thoughts, the emotions, or the knower, the awareness behind?

[Speaker 2] (1:19:17 - 1:19:17)

The observer.

[Speaker 1] (1:19:17 - 1:19:24)

The observer. And you realize you are the awareness. You are the presence.

And then that's your present.

[Speaker 2] (1:19:24 - 1:19:28)

So, we get bored because we're looking for more stimulation for the ego.

[Speaker 1] (1:19:29 - 1:20:02)

Yes, that's right. The mind looks for more food for thought. It's not finding enough food for thought.

So, the one very important point here is, you do not need to get rid of certain thoughts. It's enough to be the awareness behind the thoughts. Then the thoughts, all the dysfunctional thoughts, lose their power.

And the thoughts that remain when you are aware actually come out of awareness. And they tend to be more creative and empowered thoughts that are not negative.

[Speaker 2] (1:20:03 - 1:20:06)

All right. I hope that helped, Lisa. It did.

[Speaker 3] (1:20:06 - 1:20:07)

Thank you so much.

[Speaker 2] (1:20:07 - 1:20:13)

All right. I'm going to go to Connie now. Is Connie there?

Let's go to Connie. Connie, how are you?

[Speaker 4] (1:20:13 - 1:21:21)

Thank you both very much. You've given me many new perspectives today. I'm 49 years old and recently divorced after a 21-year marriage.

And for the first time, both of my sons are in college. And before, I was a computer programmer. And now, I have an opportunity that I love, teaching senior citizens how to communicate using computers.

But I'm under tremendous pressure to make more money and to go back to corporate America because my alimony is on a declining structure. So, my question is, will I always... I can get into the now and I have been practicing this for over five years with yoga and what have you.

But will I always or does one always go into a pain body or a fear body or a mind awareness and then come back out? Do you think it is ever possible to live peacefully in the now or is that too much of a lofty goal?

[Speaker 2] (1:21:22 - 1:21:27)

I love that question. Can you explain pain body too as you answer that question, Eckhart?

[Speaker 1] (1:21:28 - 1:24:54)

Yes, the pain body, as I call it, is an accumulation of past emotion that still lives inside you. A lot of it comes from childhood, many painful childhood experiences. And children often need to cut themselves off from emotional pain because they cannot endure it.

And that's normal for a child who suffers emotional pain. And most children these days suffer pain, one form or another. So, pain leaves remnants in the body.

And those remnants of emotional pain, I call the pain body. They are an energy form consisting of old emotion. And one way of looking at it is to look at it as almost an entity that lives inside you, an emotional entity.

It has two stages. One is dormant and one is active. So, for certain periods of time, you don't even know that you have a pain body.

And then regularly, at regular intervals, something happens and your pain body will get triggered. It will come out of its dormant state and it will move into your thinking mind and start to control your thinking. So, a very powerful negative emotion suddenly invades your thinking mind and then controls the internal dialogue, all your thinking.

The pain body has then woken up, so to speak, and it does that periodically because it needs to feed on negative energy, which can be in the form of your thoughts or it can be in the form of other people's reactions. So, the pain body will often try to provoke a negative reaction in your partner so that it can feed on the negative reaction from your partner. So, many people who are in relationships can recognize that in the periodic need for drama in relationships.

So, if you are able to observe that in yourself, then you don't get completely drawn into the pain body and then the pain body cannot renew itself through you. So, it's vital to be there as the awareness when it happens and realize, oh, there's my pain body or there's my partner's pain body. So that you don't confuse it with who you are.

So, you remain there as the awareness. Now, the question is, can we ever be free of the pain body? Can we ever be free of negative reactions falling back into all that?

This question, I would recommend that we simplify the question and rather than asking, can we ever be free, which is a huge amount of future time, can I be free at this moment? It's really the only question that you truly need to ask yourself. Because the only place where you can ever be free or need ever be free is this moment, not the rest of your life, just this moment.

Because when you look more closely, you'll see that this moment is all there ever is. So, I would recommend that you rephrase your question. Don't ask about ever or for the rest of your life, but be content with simply addressing this moment at any given time.

[Speaker 2] (1:24:54 - 1:24:56)

And what's the answer? Can you be free right now, Connie?

[Speaker 4] (1:24:59 - 1:25:02)

I'm closer to it than I have ever been before.

[Speaker 1] (1:25:02 - 1:25:06)

Yes. Yes. Thank you.

Thank you.

[Speaker 2] (1:25:06 - 1:26:10)

Eckhart, this has just been one of the great joys of my career to be able to sit down and talk to you. I mean, I thought about this time that we've shared together on this radio show. I've thought about this for so many years, like what would it be like?

What would it be like? And it has been more than I could ever imagine. And so, I was wasting my time.

I should have just waited for the now, thinking about what it could be like. Thank you for all of your encouraging inspiration that has allowed myself and so many other people who've read your works, *The Power of Now*, *Stillness Speaks*, *New Earth*, have allowed us all to see our own lives differently and to see the possibility of an awakened consciousness. Thank you so much.

Thank you, Oprah. Thank you so much. Thanks for joining us on XM 156.

I hope you enjoyed this edition of our Soul Series. These are some of my favorite conversations.

[Speaker 7] (1:26:10 - 1:26:18)

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